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NASX 235X.01: Oral and Written Traditions of Native Americans

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NASX 235X-01: Oral and Written Traditions of Native Americans
Spring 2014, T-Th 3:40-5:00pm, PFNAC 103

Instructor: Heather Cahoon
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Office: NAS 203B
Office Hours: M-W 9:00-10:00am
Th 2:30-3:30pm

Course Description

Within American Indian cultures, oral and literary expression takes a wide range of forms, from origin stories to novels, from songs to poems, from jokes to cautionary tales, and from mythic narratives to personal autobiographies. We will survey a selection of works in multiple genres, reviewing both historical and contemporary pieces, to explore prominent themes such as colonization, assimilation and cultural survival. Students will also have the opportunity to learn the components of and produce several different types of writing including research, creative non-fiction and critical literary analysis.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of and appreciation for different types of Native American oral and written literatures
2. To be able to identify the general characteristics of various tribal oral and written literary traditions
3. To increase writing skills through writing, revising, and rewriting as well as through writing exercises
4. To increase public speaking skills by presenting a research paper to the class, with visual, auditory, and/or other types of teaching aids, as appropriate
5. To learn basic research skills
6. To function within a group to create a coherent presentation of research

Required Reading

NOTE: All reading assignments and discussion questions should be done by the day they are first listed on the syllabus. You are required to bring these readings to class.

Books:

1. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday (Free electronic version available from Mansfield)
2. *Corpse Whale* by DG Nanouk Okpik
3. *Perma Red* by Debra Magpie Earling
4. A style manual specific to your discipline

Articles, Excerpts and Discussion Questions: These items will be available through electronic reserves (ERes) at <http://www.lib.umt.edu/students#eres> (select NASX235-01 and enter the **password NASX235**).

Research Papers & Group Presentations

Each student will become part of a group that will present background information on the tribe(s) living on one of the Montana reservations. Information should pertain to tribal history and culture, modern day location, treaty history (if applicable), reservation name, economic and demographic information, major contemporary issues the tribe(s) faces, any items of interest, as well as anything else you think is important for us to know about the tribe(s).

Research Paper Requirements: Each presenter is required to turn in a **3-4-page** research paper on **their** specific topic(s) within the larger presentation. This paper is due on the day your group presents. Research papers require at least three outside sources, no more than one of which can be an Internet source, **citations**, and a works cited page (no title page is required). You will be graded on your use of correct grammar, mechanics, clarity, punctuation, and the accuracy of the information you found. **This paper should be researched and written prior to the development of your presentation; therefore, it is imperative that your group outline each person's focus/role beforehand.** (A revised version of this paper is due within one week of when your original is returned to you. You **MUST** turn in both copies for full credit.)

Presentation Requirements: Each group presentation should be 25 minutes in overall length including a 2-3 minute question and answer period. Your presentation can include visual or audio aids, handouts, timelines, etc. Be creative and professional. **Remember: This is a group presentation--you must work with your group.** All group members must participate in the planning and presentation of the project. You will receive a group grade so be sure to work together. Your group will be graded on your adherence to the 25-minute time limit and the overall quality of the presentation.

Oral Traditions Exam

This exam will consist of short essay questions on the major concepts covered in the class to that point.

3-Stanza Memoir

You will be required to write a “3-Stanza Memoir” that imitates the writing technique and form N. Scott Momaday uses in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. You will be graded on your adherence to Momaday’s technique and form, your use of correct grammar, mechanics, clarity, punctuation, etc.

Literary Analysis

For this assignment, each student will examine one or more works of fiction that we read in this class. Literary analyses require should be **4-5 pages** in length, include one non-Internet outside source, *citations*, and a works cited page. You will be graded on your research efforts, clarity, grammar, mechanics, punctuation, adherence to the writing guidelines of your discipline, and ingenuity of your thesis statement.

Course Policies

Attendance and participation: Three unexcused absences are allowed. You do not need to notify me if your absence is **unexcused**, but you should find out what you missed from a classmate and see me if you have any questions. Your attendance and participation grade will drop 2 points for every unexcused absence thereafter. Excessive tardiness or leaving early will be considered as an absence. If you come to class but sleep, talk to friends, listen to head phones, text, email, etc. you will NOT receive credit for attending that day. Use common sense and be respectful. Cell phones and headphones may not be used in class. **Please note: This is called attendance AND participation.** Your contribution to the class is important and you must be prepared for and actively participate in every class.

Papers/Late Papers: *Papers must be submitted in strict accordance with the format of your discipline—MLA, APA or Chicago.* Late papers will lose 3 points per day. I will not accept papers later than three days without a university or medical excuse. (In some extreme cases I may also excuse an absence.)

Code of Academic Integrity: Work submitted for written assignments must be your own work. Submitting another person’s work (either borrowed language or ideas) as your own may be grounds for expulsion. **Please note that failing to include citation information equals plagiarism!** All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be granted in the case of an extreme circumstance or university or medical excuse. Students must have completed at least 80% of the course to receive an incomplete and must get permission from me before finals week.

Students with Disabilities: This course is accessible to and usable by otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. Disability Services for Students will assist the instructor and student in the modification process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

Points:

Attendance and Participation	10
Daily free writes	5
Group presentation	10
Research paper	20
Revised research paper	10
Oral Traditions Exam	15
3-Stanza Memoir	10
Literary Analysis	<u>+ 20</u>
	100

Grading:

A 93-100	C 73-76
A- 90-92	C- 70-72
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 83-86	D 63-66
B- 80-82	D- 60-62
C+ 77-79	F 0-59

COURSE OUTLINE**Week 1**

- 1/28 Introduction to NASX 235
 1/30 “American Indians 101: FAQs”; Presentation Group selections; Research paper writing basics & style review (Discuss MLA, APA or Chicago Sample Research Papers available on ERes—bring only the one specific to your style. Also bring your style manuals to class.)

Week 2

- 2/4 Film, *Distant Voices, Thunder Words*
 2/6 Introduction to oral traditions (Discuss ERes articles by (1) Peggy V. Beck, Anna Lee Walters & Nia Francisco and (2) Leslie Marmon Silko)

Week 3

- 2/11 Origin stories (Discuss ERes articles (1) Gregory Schrempp and (2) “Four American Indian Origin Stories”)
 2/13 **Blackfeet & Crow Presentations** (Discuss ERes articles: (1) “Blackfeet Stories” and (2) “Crow Stories and review discussion questions)

Week 4

- 2/18 **Flathead & Fort Peck Presentations** (Discuss ERes articles: (1) “Salish-Pend d’ Oreille Stories,” (2) Kootenai Stories” and (3) “Sioux Stories” and review discussion questions)
 2/20 **Fort Peck & Northern Cheyenne Presentations** (Discuss ERes articles: (1) “Northern Cheyenne Stories,” (2) “Gros Ventre Stories” and (3) “Assiniboine Stories” and review discussion questions)

Week 5

- 2/25 **Rocky Boy’s & Little Shell Presentations** (Discuss ERes article: (1) “Chippewa and Cree Stories” and (2) “Little Shell Tribe Legends” and review discussion questions)
 2/27 **Oral Traditions Exam**; In-class recap of oral traditions

Week 6

- 3/4 Oratory (Discuss ERes articles: (1) Red Jacket & (2) Elias Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites”)
 3/6 Autobiography (Discuss ERes article, Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala Ša), “Impressions of an Indian Childhood”)

Week 7

- 3/11 Essays (Discuss ERes articles: (1) Janet Campbell Hale, “Return to Bear Paw,” (2) Louise Erdrich, “Skunk Dreams,” & Michael Dorris, “For Indians, No Thanksgiving”)
 3/13 Essays continued (Discuss ERes articles: (1) Luci Tapahonso, “A Classic Drop Off” & (2) “A Special Treat” & (3) Vine Deloria, Jr., “Indians Today, the Real and Unreal”)

Week 8

- 3/18 Jokes & Songs (Discuss ERes article “The Drums, Songs and Singers”) (**Guest speaker Pat Legg**)
3/20 Memoir (Discuss N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, pp. ix-41)

Week 9

- 3/25 Memoir continued (Discuss Momaday, pp. 43-63)
3/27 Memoir continued (Discuss Momaday, pp. 65-89)

Week 10

- 4/1 **No Class/Spring Break**
4/3 **No Class/Spring Break**

Week 11

- 4/8 **3-Stanza Memoir Due**; Poetry (Discuss DG Nanouk Okpik, *Corpse Whale*—Read “lightly” pp. 1-47 with a close reading of “Moon of the...” (p.19), “The Fate of...” (p.26), “Ninilchik” (p. 38), “If Oil is...” (p. 42), and “Demons in a...” (p. 47).)
4/10 Poetry continued (Discuss Okpik—Read “lightly” pp. 48-94 with a close reading of “*Inyukuksaivik...*” (p. 50), “Cell Block on...” (p. 55), “Under Erasure...” (p. 58), “Tulunigrap” (p. 80), and “She Sang to...” (p. 81)

Week 12

- 4/15 Literary analysis review (Discuss “Sample Literary Analysis (MLA)” available on ERes); Short stories (Discuss ERes articles: (1) Sherman Alexie, “What You Pawn I Will Redeem” & (2) “A Good Story”)
4/17 Short stories continued (Discuss ERes article: Sherman Alexie, “Assimilation”)

Week 13

- 4/22 Novels (Discuss Debra Earling, *Perma Red*, pp. 1-54)
4/24 Novels continued (Discuss Earling, pp. 55-103)

Week 14

- 4/29 Novels continued (Discuss Earling, pp. 104-151)
5/1 Novels continued (Discuss Earling, pp. 152-201)

Week 15

- 5/6 Novels continued (Discuss Earling, pp. 202-247)
5/8 **Literary Analysis Due**; Novels continued (Discuss Earling, pp. 248-296)